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THE 25th BATTERY

Canadian Field Artillery

(Canadian Militia — 1908-1914)

BY

LIEUT. COL. F. H. H. MEWBURN, V.D., R.C.A.M.C.

Reserve of Officers



The original of this text was given as an address at a
Mess Dinner of the Gunners' Mess in Edmonton
during the summer of 1938.

Prior to 1908 the only artillery that had been stationed in Alberta or the North West Territories was the artillery section of the North West Mounted Police. During the Rebellion of 1885, this section was augmented by artillery from the East, but these units returned home when the Rebellion had been suppressed. There had been several cannon in Alberta, but these were odd pieces of ordnance of various vintages and calibres, which had graced the walls of some of the old trading posts.

In 1908 the organization of Military District No. 13 was well under way and a number of units were being formed in various towns and cities throughout the Province. As might be expected in a western country, the majority of these units belonged to the mounted services. The District Officer Commanding at that time was Col. Sam Steele, C.B., M.V.O., who had been in command since June, 1907. He was no stranger to Alberta, for he was one of the originals of the North West Mounted Police and in the course of his duties had been over most of the West, and had been in the Yukon during the Gold Rush of 1898. He had served in the Red River Rebellion of 1870, the Riel Rebellion of 1885, and had commanded Strathcona's Horse during the South African War. In 1901 he went back to South Africa for service with the South African Constabulary and returned to Canada in June, 1907. From this short account of his service we can see that the D. O. C. was quite familiar with the West and its ways, and was thoroughly at home in the job of raising mounted units.

Militia Orders, dated February 1st, 1908, carried the authority for the organization of a battery of field artillery with headquarters at Lethbridge. It was to be known as the 25th Battery of the Canadian Field Artillery. It had the unique honor of being the farthest west battery of horse or field artillery in the British Empire for, at that time, there were no horse or field batteries in British Columbia. The first battery Commander was Major J. S. Stewart, who had served as a trooper in Strathcona's Horse during the South African War. The only other officer appointed that year was Captain Alvin Ripley. During the summer of 1908 a few men were taken on and some uniforms issued, but no training was carried out. There was no armoury and the guns, battery stores, and other equipment were stored in the Major's backyard and barn. The oath of allegiance was administered and the battery

roll signed in the backyard, over an old packing case, which did duty for a desk.

Perhaps it might be interesting to give some details of the organization, uniform and equipment of the field battery of thirty odd years ago. The Canadian field batteries were four gun batteries, with an establishment of four officers, to which supernumerary officers were added. A major commanded the battery, a captain was the second in command, and quartermaster, while each of the two sections was commanded by a lieutenant. Most of the batteries were brigaded into brigades of two or three batteries, but there were four or five unbrigaded or so-called "independent" batteries. As the 25th belonged to this latter group a medical officer, a veterinary officer, and a chaplain were also added to the establishment.



A sub-section on mounted parade in camp. Four-horse teams, old type harness, and 12 pr. Mk. 1, with gunners mounted on vehicles, training uniform with straw hats.

The armament consisted of four guns and four wagons. This was known as the "firing battery." For mobilization four more wagons and limbers were to be added, which were known as the "first line wagons", so that on active service each sub-section would consist of a gun and two wagons. However, previous to the outbreak of war in 1914, all that we saw or handled was the "firing battery". The Canadian Field Artillery was armed with 12-pounder, breech-loading guns, with the exception of two batteries in Guelph, Ontario, which had 5-inch howitzers as their armament. Most of these 12-pounders were Mark IV guns, but as the 25th was a brand new battery, it had to be content with the old Mark I variety. These guns,

of course, had no shields, no recoil mechanism, no dial sights, and no fixed ammunition.

As there was no long recoil mechanism the shock of discharge was transmitted directly to the carriage, with the result that it jumped up in the air and dug the trail deep into the ground, or the carriage ran back if the ground was hard. To counteract this activity the carriage was fitted with a device known as a spade. This affair did look very much like an enlarged garden spade, and was hinged to the under side of the axle by what would correspond to the handle. The broad part of the spade engaged in the ground when lowered, and when travelling was hooked up to the underside of the trail by a spring catch. On coming into action this catch was released allowing the broad part of the spade to fall and engage in the ground. The braking force of the spade was transmitted to the carriage by two pieces of wire cable, and a spring enclosed in a steel housing in the trail.



Battery sergeants grouped about a gun. Details of the 12 pr. Mk. 1 show up well, leather buckets and leather cover for the Scott sight bracket.

In addition to the fore and hind sights these guns were fitted with Scott sights, which had been designed by Admiral Sir Percy Scott, who was one of the leading gunnery experts of the Royal Navy. These were telescopic sights, with an attachment for putting on the angle of sight, so that they could be used for either direct or indirect laying. The sight fitted into a bracket over the right hand trunion, and of course, had to be removed before the gun was fired. Instead of dial sights, the 12-pounder Mark I was fitted with a gun arc. This was a piece of hard wood, unpainted, and about three or four feet long, and so shaped that it fitted snugly over the fore-

sights of the gun, with the length of the gun arc at right angles to the axis of the piece. The upper surface was drilled with holes about a sixteenth of an inch in diameter, and so spaced that the angle subtended by two adjacent holes and the hindsight was half a degree. The gun arc was longer on one side than the other, subtending twenty-three and a half degrees on the short side and forty-seven degrees on the long side. The required angle was marked by placing two-inch nails in the proper holes on the gun arc. Matches were generally used when the nails were lost and had the disadvantage of plugging up the holes when they got broken off before being removed. Laying out lines of fire for angles greater than those on the gun arc, necessitated the operation being done in two or more stages. Supposing the angle was sixty degrees and had to be placed on the long or forty-seven degree side of the arc. The lines of fire would be laid out at forty-seven degrees, and the aiming posts planted, and then a further shift of thirteen degrees would be made from this line. The aiming posts were then picked up and planted in this new line of fire, and the gun re-laid.

The detachments, when in action, stood up and did not kneel as at present. After the lines of fire had been laid out, and the range and angle of sight added, the gun was ready to be loaded and fired. The only ammunition issued at that time to the field guns was shrapnel, while the howitzers used a lydite shell. With the 12-pounder the fuse was set as ordered, and the shell placed in the bore of the gun. The No. 1 then unshipped his handspike, reversed it, took a step forward, and placing the leather covered end of the handspike against the base of the shell, rammed it securely home until the copper driving band of the shell engaged the rifling. He then stepped back and replaced the handspike in its socket at the end of the trail. The cartridge, which consisted of the required charge of cordite in a shaloon bag, was then placed in the chamber. The breech was closed, and the cam lever was held up while a "T" friction tube was inserted into the breech mechanism. The lay was then checked, and the gun was reported ready for firing. On the caution, "No.gun", the whole detachment jumped clear of the gun. The layer first removed the Scott sight from its bracket, and the firing number hooked the lanyard into the friction tube and held it taut. On the command, "Fire!" the gun was fired by pulling the lanyard. As there was no long recoil mechanism the carriage usually jumped up

in the air, from a few inches to a foot or two, and ran back. The distance it ran back depended on the character of the gun platform. If it was soft the trail was driven into the ground, and if it was very hard so that the spade could not engage it was likely to run back several feet. The detachment then doubled in and man-handled the gun back to its original position, and relaid it. The gun was not balanced the way present-day equipment is, and it required the efforts of two men to lift the trail. From this description, it will be seen that there was a great deal of manual labour connected with the firing of the gun in action, and it required men of good physique to stand the gaff. The rate of fire could not compare with that of the present day. After ranging had been completed, the usual rate of fire was "section fire" at 20 seconds interval and even that could not be kept up for any great length of time.

The motive power of the guns and wagons was supplied by four horse teams. As far as I can remember the establishment of horses for the battery was between sixty and eighty. This, of course, included the riding horses of the officers, mounted N. C. O.'s, and the battery commander's party. The Numbers 1 were mounted and rode beside the lead driver of the gun team. The next senior N. C. O. rode beside the lead driver of the wagon, and were known as coverers. The Sergeant-Major, Quartermaster-Sergeant, farrier-sergeant, trumpeters, signallers, range-takers, and horse-holders, were all mounted. In this day and age of mechanization this must seem a tremendous number of horses for a unit to take to a training camp of twelve days' duration, and one might worry about the training of men and horses. As a matter of fact, the horses fell into the routine very quickly and enjoyed it, though at first they were strange to the harness and the method of hooking up. In some years, particularly the early ones, the first mounted parades brought forth plenty of mix-ups with the gun and wagon teams that resembled some of the sights now seen at exhibitions, such as the Calgary Stampede. We always had a most appreciative audience from the other troops in camp who were always interested in these performances of the battery. At that time in the development of the West the man or boy who could not ride or handle horses was hard to find, so we did not have to teach the men how to ride or drive. The majority of the horses were procured from ranchers around about Lethbridge, and it was no uncommon thing for a rancher to come to camp as a driver and bring twenty-five or thirty

head of horses in with him. The remainder of the horses belonged to the members of the battery, or were rented from people in town. The rent for the horses was a dollar and a half per day, plus forage. The harness was of the old type with neck collars and rope traces which had probably seen service in the South African War. The greatest difficulty with this type of harness was getting a proper fit of the collars. As we only had a few spare collars it took several days and a lot of juggling before the the fitting of the battery was considered satisfactory.

The uniform was blue, with scarlet facings. The cap was a blue naval pattern with scarlet cap band, and a scarlet piping at the edge of the crown. The jackets were blue, with scarlet collars and shoulder straps and a knot of yellow braid at the cuffs. There was also a strip of the same yellow braid at the base of the collar. The drivers wore blue cloth breeches with a broad scarlet stripe and black leather leggings and spurs. The gunners wore blue trousers with the same broad scarlet stripe, but no leggings or spurs. A brown leather waist belt was worn instead of the present-day bandolier. Sling belts



Group about a gun. On the left are a bombardier and driver with breeches, leggings and spurs. On the right are gunners with trousers and no spurs. Stripes were worn on the right arm only.

were provided for the sergant-major and the quartermaster-sergeant, and were worn by as many other N. C. O.'s as could get them. As a rule these extra belts were procured when the individual was down taking a course at the Royal School of Artillery in Kingston. Cloaks and great-coats—the former worn by drivers and mounted men and the latter by gunners—were of blue material with brass buttons. The fatigue and drill dress of shirt and breeches and slacks was issued

in camp, and was made up of blue cotton stuff. The difficulty with this blue drill outfit was that the dye had a great tendency to run. Straw hats were issued in camp and were turned up on one side after the Australian fashion. The cap badge was of brass or gilt metal, and was the well-known gun badge of the gunners. The word "CAN-ADA" was placed in the scroll above the gun instead of



Group of drivers on Stable Parade. Evidently filling nose bags.
The drill uniform is blue.

"UBIQUE" as at present. The collar badges were brass grenades, and the battery number was worn as a shoulder-strap badge.

The procedure of going to camp in those days always seemed to me to be a much more informal affair than it is at the present time, and the amount of office work was practically nothing. About a month or six weeks before camp a sergeant-instructor was sent out from the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in Kingston to get everything in shape. The guns and wagons were gone over, harness sorted out and uniforms and equipment made ready for issue. At that time we only had a temporary armoury,—usually some old unused barn which was leased to the Government for that purpose. A few cheap alterations were made for an office and shelving and pegs fitted to carry the stores and harness. During this period parades were held two or three nights a week and preliminary instruction was given in foot drill, section gun drill and gun laying. For this purpose a gun or two were run out on some vacant lot and the instruction proceeded under the gaze of a very interested audience of townspeople. Some of the men would be in uniform while others were in mufti on these parades, but the

closer we got to the time for camp the more uniforms appeared. The rate of recruiting varied. In the beginning it was usually slow until a few days before leaving for camp, when a rush would start, and in an evening or two more than half the establishment would be taken on the strength. In that era training at local headquarters was not an essential for a man to proceed to camp and even medical inspection was not held until after we had arrived. The day before leaving, the guns and wagons were loaded on flat cars, and the stock cars were checked and spotted at the stockyards which were then about a mile or two east of the town. In addition to the passenger cars for the officers and men we had a box car for baggage and battery stores. For the first two or three years the trip to and from Calgary was made by daylight, but in 1913 and 1914 the journeys were made at night with a morning arrival at the destination.

In 1909 Col. Steele was transferred to Winnipeg to take command of Military District No. 10, and Lieut.-Col E. A. Cruikshank became District Officer Commanding. During that year Capt. Ripley and Lieut. Mewburn attended the Royal



Firing party marching from armoury to the "Square" on May 20th, 1910.
Blue uniform, white cap covers and brown waist belts.
Officers with Sam Browne belts and swords.

School of Artillery in Kingston and became qualified in their respective ranks. There was no other activity in the battery that year.

The first public appearance of the battery was in the evening of May 20th, 1910. The occasion was the firing of sixty-eight minute guns for the funeral of the late King Edward VII. The firing took place on the old "Square". This was a square

piece of bald-headed prairie about ten acres in extent, situated in centre of the old townsite and was surrounded by a chain fence. Originally, I believe, it was designed as a place for turning the bull teams which did the freighting in the country in the early days. Later it was the place where games and athletic contests were held, and now it has been turned into a very beautiful park known as Galt Gardens. The guns were



"Battery Fire, One Minute." Picture on the "Square", looking south-east.

hauled down and placed in position on the Square during the afternoon and the firing party marched down from the temporary armoury in the evening. The party consisted of about twenty of all ranks, with Major J. S. Stewart in command, and though they had had very little training they acquitted themselves in a very artillery-like manner.

Since we have been getting broadcasts direct from England, I am sure now that on that occasion we made a miscalculation and fired our salute just twelve hours late. The minute guns were to be fired simultaneously throughout the Empire at a point in the funeral ceremonies which took place in the early afternoon. We know now that this time of day in England is around seven or eight o'clock in the morning in Alberta. We fired the salute about that time in the evening. However, the error apparently passed unnoticed, and anyway it did not spoil the ceremony from the battery's point of view.

In June the battery proceeded to Calgary for its first annual training of twelve days. The camp that year was held at the Indian Industrial School grounds in East Calgary. Compared with the present-day camp at Sarcée this one had none of the comforts of home. All the water had to be hauled with

teams and water carts, as there was no system of water mains. There were no showers for officers or men, and the latrines were of the trench type such as are used in bivouac. To get a bath one had to ride into Calgary, and put up at a hotel or visit some friend or relative in the city.

The battery left Lethbridge early in the morning in its special train of stock, flat and passenger cars, and after a tedious, long, hot and tiring trip, arrived in East Calgary in the late afternoon. After a lot of work the men, horses and vehicles were unloaded and hooked up, and we were ready to march to the camp site. When the order was given to mount, a commotion took place in one of the gun teams, and it shot out of line and streaked across the prairie at full gallop, minus one of the drivers who had been thrown in mounting. The gunners riding on the gun and limber thought it great sport to be travelling at that speed, and did not know what a dangerous predicament they were in. However, the runaway was brought under control before any serious damage was done. The driver was extremely lucky, because instead of being run



Battery in gun park on return from Coronation Day Parade in Calgary in 1911. Cavalry lines in background.

over by the gun and seriously injured he only broke a small bone in one of his hands, and spent the rest of camp with his arm in a plaster-of-Paris cast.

As this was the first camp there was a tremendous amount of work to be done. It was the first occasion that the complete unit with men, horses and vehicles had ever been got together. There were lots of green men and lots of green horses, with the result that all through the camp there never seemed to be

a spare moment. So many men had been taken on in the last day or so, that there had not been time to get them posted to their sub-sections. This had to be carried out and the rudiments of military discipline and army procedure had to be inculcated into them.. The horses had to be sorted out into the various teams and mated up for size and colour as far as pos-



OFFICERS AND SERGEANTS IN 1911:

Standing—Sgt. Hall, Sgt. Farrier Macdonald, Sgt. Self, R.C.H.A.
 Left to Right—Sgt. Taylor, Sgt. Jones, B. S. M. Silliker, Sgt. Morris,
 Q.M.S. Gibson, Sgt. Laliberte.
 Sitting—Lieut. Mewburn, Major Stewart, Captain Ripley,
 Lieut. Gillespie, C.A.M.C.

sible. Then, as mentioned before, there was the job of getting the best possible fit out of the collars that we had at our disposal.

Everyone turned out on the six a.m. parade. The drivers were turned into the stables and the gunners went to the gun park for section gun drill and gun laying practice. The signalers usually went off by themselves and worked on semaphore and morse. This parade finished about seven a.m., and the men had breakfast and then made preparations for the nine a.m. parade. This necessitated falling in about eight fifteen, and harnessing up. When the horses were harnessed they were taken out to the gun park and hooked up. Everything was checked by the section commanders and the parade was ready to be handed over to the battery commander by nine o'clock. This mounted parade consisted of battery manoeuvre and the taking up of various gun positions and laying out lines of fire. About eleven o'clock the battery returned to the gun park, unhooked, and the horses were led back to their places on the lines. Soon after this "Stables" was sounded, and the

grooming, watering and feeding took the best part of an hour. Following stables the men went to dinner. The afternoon was taken up with a similar show starting at two p.m. After evening stables there was supper, and when the stable picquet had been mounted most of the day's work was finished. Sunday brought the camp church parade in the morning, and the rest of the day was free. Our usual procedure on this day was to turn all the horses off the lines for the day and drive them out in a bunch to spend the day on the grass. They were looked after by relays of drivers, and were brought back to the lines in the afternoon, about the usual time of evening stables.

The two outstanding events during this camp were the reading of the proclamation of the accession of King George V., and an inspection of the troops by Lord French. The reading of the proclamation was done by Col. Cruikshank and took place on a hot morning. The troops paraded on foot in review order and stood at attention while the reading was being carried out. The usual number of men collapsed from standing still for such a long period and also on account of the heat. This was the first time that the 25th had ever paraded with other troops. Lord French's inspection consisted of a ride around the troops on the day of their annual sham battle. The travelling escort was supplied by the 15th Light Horse of Calgary. From the speed with which the General travelled it looked as if he were trying to leave the escort behind and show them how well he and his staff could ride. However, this day he had an escort he could not shake off, and they demonstrated they could ride just as fast and go any place Lord French could.

As a result of this camp many N. C. O.'s and men applied to take courses at Kingston. The usual procedure was to leave after Christmas or the New Year and stay down there for three months. At that time of the year business was usually slack and there was not much doing on the farm or ranch. The men all had a good trip down to Kingston at the Government's expense, and when there they met men from all parts of Canada, as this was the only school for field artillery in Canada. Instructional pay in those days was \$1.00 per day for officers and 50 cents for other ranks. Each year the number of men going on these courses increased and, as a result, the annual training became easier for all concerned.

In 1911 the battery again proceeded to Calgary for annual training. This year the camp was moved from the site of the

previous year at the Industrial School in East Calgary to a position near the reservoir southwest of Calgary. This camp had a few more luxuries in the way of latrines, ablution tables and water supply. Though the reservoir was well guarded by sentries and placed out of bounds to the troops, rumour was most persistent that it was a remarkably good place for swimming, particularly during the hot weather of the camp. There may or may not have been some truth in this rumour, but the next year the camp was moved away from the reservoir and close to the present situation of Sarcee Camp. The outstanding event of this camp was the Coronation Day parade on June 22nd, when all the troops took part in a parade through the streets of Calgary.



Battery in action behind the ridge which forms the background of picture. Near the crest are some of the B.C.'s party. The make-shift wagons have to be unhooked instead of being unlimbered, as was horse artillery practice

Between the 1911 camp and the commencement of the 1912 training the organization and equipment of the battery were changed. Though the name in the Militia List was not changed the 25th became a battery of horse artillery, armed with 13-pounder, quick-firing guns. This gun had a very similar appearance to the 18-pounder, which was the gun of the field batteries. It was easily spotted, however, as the muzzle of the piece did not project past the end of the buffer. The calibre was three inches, and the gun and carriage lighter in weight so that the load behind the horse was five hundred pounds, as against seven hundred in the case of the 18-pounder. The gun and wagon teams were increased from four to six horses and, as all the gun detachments were mounted, this increased the

number of horses to well over a hundred. The harness was changed from the old type to the breast collar pattern, which was used up till the time mechanization took place and the horses dispensed with. The uniform was also changed. The blue breeches and trousers of the drivers and gunners were replaced by khaki bedford cord breeches with a narrow blue stripe down the sides. Khaki puttees took the place of the



OFFICERS IN CAMP IN 1912

Back row: Lieut. Mewburn, Lieut. Rose,

Front row: Captrin Ripley, Major Stewart, Captain Watson, C.A.V.C.

black leather leggings and all ranks wore spurs. The jacket was of similar cut to the previous issue, but had no yellow braid on the collar or the cuff and the collar was blue. The only scarlet on the jacket was the scarlet of the shoulder straps. The drill dress was changed from the blue canvas to khaki and in camp straw hats were issued as before. The cap, collar and shoulder strap badges were unchanged. For drill and training the officers wore khaki while for ceremonial they carried on with blue breeches instead of the khaki ones worn by other ranks.

At the beginning of 1912, the 5th Mounted Brigade was formed with Lieut.-Col. R. Belcher, C.M.G., of Edmonton, in command. He had previously been the first Officer Commanding the 19th Alberta Dragoons. Major P. A. Moore, of the 15th Light Horse, was Brigade Major. The 5th Mounted Brigade was composed of the following units:

15th Light Horse.

19th Alberta Dragoons.

23rd Alberta Rangers.

25th Battery, C. F. A.

5th Mounted Brigade Ammunition Column.

4th Field Troop, C. E.

Wireless Telegraph Detachment, C.E.

No. 14 Company, C. A. S. C.

No. XVII Cavalry Field Ambulance.

The Brigade Ammunition Column and the Wireless Telegraph Detachment were not organized.

As is usual with a change of equipment, there always seems to be some important part missing. We arrived in camp in 1912 with a full establishment of men and horses and four 13-pounders, but no gun or wagon limbers or dial sights. Fortunately, in Ordnance Stores in Calgary, there were four 12-pounder wagons and limbers, and some old two-wheel water carts. It was decided to use the wagon limbers as the gun limbers, and by chaining the wagon bodies to the water



Mounted parade 1912. First year as Horse Artillery. The signal being given is "Halt". Major Stewart is the officer in the centre on a white horse. The breast collar type of harness can be seen.

carts, we managed to get four firing battery wagons. The resulting inability to unlimber did not have any bad effect on the training. The only difference was, that on coming into action, we were unable to unlimber the wagon, but had to unhook the wagon team. In those days the horse artillery unlimbered the wagon while the field artillery unhooked. Improvised dial sights were made by having the wheeler cut circular discs out of a 10 or 12 inch board. Holes were punched at the circumference at such a distance apart that two adjacent holes subtended an angle of five degrees when sighted over the centre pivot. With this makeshift equipment the training of the first battery of horse artillery in Alberta was carried

out. The officers in camp that year were Major J. S. Stewart, Captain Alvin Ripley, and Lieutenants F. H. H. Mewburn and F. M. Rose; in addition, Captain E. A. Watson, of the Canadian Army Veterinary Corps, was attached.

In the fall of 1912, the Duke of Connaught, who was then Governor General of Canada, made a tour of Western Canada, and, in the course of his itinerary, visited Lethbridge. The 25th turned out for the occasion, and was inspected by His



Inspection by H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught at Lethbridge in 1912.
The Governor General's party walking across the front of the battery.
~~The March Past "Eyes Right"~~

Royal Highness. Following the inspection the battery marched past, trotted past, and finished up with a gallop past.

The training in 1913 was similar to that in 1912, but by this time we had received our gun limbers firing battery wagons, and last, but not least, the No. 7 day sight. The Gunnery Instructor that year was Major J. N. S. Leslie, who was commanding "A" Battery, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. Ever since the previous year when we began to manoeuvre as horse artillery, there had been a well sustained controversy with District Headquarters as to our proper place in ceremonial. We contended, as we were organized and were training as horse artillery, that we should have all the privileges of horse artillery. The one that we were after, of course, was that on parade with our guns, we should take the right of the line. Headquarters, on the other hand, argued that as we were still called field artillery in the Militia List that settled it and, consequently, our place was on the left of the cavalry. That year the troops were inspected by Sir Ian Hamilton, who

had been brought out to Canada to give a report on the defences of the country. I remember that on this parade we did get our rightful place on the right of the line. I also remember Major Leslie, as representing the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, was careful to place himself on our right.

About this time artillery training was increased from twelve to sixteen days to allow the batteries to do live shell practice. The batteries in Ontario and the Western part of Quebec did this training at Petawawa. Batteries farther away did twelve days' training at local camps and sent firing detachments to Petawawa. However, as artillery ranges in the West were being built near Brandon in M. D. 10, and at Sarcee in M. D. 13, we hoped that probably next year we would do our sixteen days at Sarcee, including firing practice.

In 1914 the battery went under canvas at Sarcee in the early part of July. The Gunnery Instructor from Kingston was Major D. I. V. Eaton, then commanding "B" Battery,

THE DUKE IS
SECOND FROM THE
RIGHT ON THE
STAND.



THE MARCH PAST — EYES RIGHT.

The Duke of Connaught is on the reviewing stand with raised hat.

Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. He was a very fine horseman, and was extremely interested in some of the Western methods of handling horses. The battery had one horse who would let nobody touch the top of his head, and to put the bridle on him it was necessary to throw him with a rope each time. After the bridle was in place, he was allowed up and carried on in a perfectly normal manner. As there were two mounted parades each day this performance took place every morning and afternoon. All the time we were in camp Major Eaton missed very few of these exhibitions. The loss of whips amongst the drivers was quite a problem. On account of west-

ern horses being trained to neck rein this loss did not present any difficulty in guiding the horse, but it was impossible to give a proper "eyes right" without a whip.

This year the battery did sixteen days' training and as the ranges at Sarcee had been completed we did our first live shell practice. We now felt like real artillerymen, for we had done our complete training from soup to nuts. Before this year we



A 13 pr. Q. F. Mk. 1 in action.

knew we could ride and drive and do our battery manoeuvre and now we were pretty sure that our gunnery was up to the mark. The addition of firing practice at the training camp gave a great stimulus to the work of the battery. It got everybody down to real business and took a great deal of the make-believe out of the training. It boosted the esprit de corps of the unit to a marked degree.

At this camp it was again demonstrated that Almighty God has always kept a watchful eye on the Canadian Field Artillery. On the last day of firing practice, when the battery was back in the lines and the ammunition being checked over, it was found that one round was missing. A thorough search was made and not until someone looked in the bore of a gun was the lost round discovered. On being withdrawn from the gun the fuse was found to be set at "Shrapnel Zero", and no safety catch had been set on the gun! On the way in from the ranges some battery manoeuvre had been indulged in at the gallop. As any jar or bump might have set the round off, one hesitates to think of the consequences of such an accident, with the gunners riding in rear of the gun muzzle at "Detachments Rear."

The last day in camp was a busy one. The morning was taken up with a sham battle in which all the troops took part. In the afternoon we had our ceremonial inspection by Major Eaton. The battery turned out in review order and the ceremony finished up with the march past, a trot past, and as a grand finale we galloped past in "close Interval-Detachments Front." This latter was one of the prettiest formations of a battery of horse artillery, and at the gallop was the most thrilling. After a few remarks to the battery by the Inspecting Officer, the unit proceeded to its lines and got down to the job of breaking camp. During the evening the battery marched into Calgary, loaded with guns, vehicles and horses on a special train which made the night run to Lethbridge, where they arrived the following morning.

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CUT ON NEXT
PAGE.



Mounted parade. Here the battery is halted in line with "Detachments Rear". The six-horse teams and the make-shift limbers for the wagons can easily be seen. In the background are the tents of the camp.

The officers in camp that year were Major J. S. Stewart, Captain Alvin Ripley, Lieutenants F. H. H. Mewburn, C. R. M. Godwin, and W. H. McLelland; Captain E. A. Watson, of the Veterinary Corps, was again attached to the battery. Later on in the year when the results of the Canadian Artillery Association were given out we discovered that the 25th had won the Czowski Cup. This cup is given for second place in battery manoeuvre amongst the batteries of the Dominion.

Though there were war rumblings in Europe, I don't think the possibility of active service was considered at all seriously in the rush to get clothing and equipment turned into stores for another year. Yet on August 4th the Empire went to war,



and we all had a chance to show that the old militia training had not been in vain. Everybody and every unit was deluging Ottawa with wires, volunteering for active service. Everyone felt that he had to get in on the ground floor and that quickly, or he would have no chance of seeing active service. All the writers on military subjects for some time past had been devoting pages and pages in expounding the theory that a war could not last longer than a few months at the very outside. However, before the war was over several years had passed, several batteries had been raised, and many hundreds of men had left Lethbridge in artillery units.

THIS TITLE
SHOULD BE UNDER
CUT ON PREVIOUS
PAGE.



Mounted parade. The battery is evidently doing a left-wheel or "right shoulder". The gunners are at "Detachments Front", riding three abreast in two ranks in front of the gun teams.

By the end of 1914 all the officers and most of the men of the 25th were in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Lieut. Godwin and twenty-five N. C. O.'s and men left a few weeks after the declaration of war for Ottawa and were attached to the 2nd Battery. Major Stewart, Captain Ripley and Lieutenants Mewburn and McLelland were the original officers of the 20th Overseas Battery.

Having been a battery headquarters for a number of years, Lethbridge became an artillery town. It is interesting to note that when the Armistice was signed on November 11th, 1918, the Canadian Corps had three Lethbridge batteries in France. The 20th was a Second Division unit, the 39th belonged to the Third Division, and the 61st was a battery in the Fifth Divisional Artillery. The 78th, which was the fourth battery raised in Lethbridge, was a depot battery, and did not leave Canada.